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Singing Styles Around the World

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I declare that I wrote my bachelor thesis quite independently using the indicated sources and literature.

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INTRODUCTION

It is said that people expressed their feelings through singing before they expressed their thoughts verbally. Singing provided humans with a way to express joy, sorrow, faith and so on. In this thesis, I provide a brief history of music, and analyze some of the various singing styles that have developed throughout the world. The thesis begins with brief highlights of the history of singing through the ages that suggests that singing was a primary means of expression and communication. Then I provide the reader with a review of the vocal mechanism. Arguably, as an instrumentalist takes care of his instrument and aims to keep it in good condition; singers need also take care of their “instrument” – the voice and body that are indeed the instrument of singing. Next I discuss the classifications of the singing voice according to their vocal range or pitch abilities. Having discussed that, various singing styles will be elaborated. Due to the fact that there are numerous singing styles it would be rather difficult to analyze all of them, seven of the most interesting ones to me were selected, including Bel canto, Belting, Choral style, Jazz, Overtone singing or Throat singing, Rock and Gospel.

Bel Canto, which translates into beautiful singing, is a technique used in Opera singing that requires repetitive practice. Through this technique the singer develops a vocal scale that it is pure, unbroken and legato. Belting is a very different technique from Bel Canto, in that it is the vocal style that singers use in pop and musical theatre. Choral singing is about the different qualities of tone that can be produced by multiple voices and the creation of choral tone that sounds as one even though all voices can be heard. Jazz style is all about improvisation with an existing melody. The main difference is in the way the music is approached and presented with the improvisation. Overtone singing is a distinguishable form of singing due to the way in which the singer manoeuvres the overtones. The astonishing thing about this style that a singer can produce two voices simultaneously. Rock style is all about energy. In order to be a good rock singer you need to include energy in a song and to keep it at a consistently high level while he sings. Through the whole performance the singer need to entirely rocking with energy even

while still or silent. Finally, Gospel is a sacred style in which the performers sing with their souls and embellish their performance with melodic improvisation and ornamentation. In this project I had to reconsider some of my beliefs about singing and this has helped to expand my horizons regarding singing.

History of Singing

It is difficult to specify the exact origin of singing; however, it is universally acknowledged that singing emerged before the development of spoken language. After all, voice is our original musical instrument and even the most primitive and isolated human cultures could sing as it is evidenced through incantations and rites which were celebrated in song. It is likely the earliest singing was distinctive and improvisatory, an imitation of the sounds heard in nature. ¹Nonetheless, even though we cannot establish at what point the singing of meaningful, communicative sounds began it was doubtless an important step in the creation of language. Primitive man sung to invoke his gods with prayers and celebrate his rites of passage with chants and songs, and recount his history and heroics with ballads and epics. The major early cultures that were sources for Western music each had distinctive musical characteristics that associated, in an extent, to their respective languages. Experts found that a culture's spoken language and its musical expression influence each other, but the connection is extremely composite and not well understood. The first song, the Sumerian Hymn to Creation, dated before 800 B.C., which is the oldest notated music extant. ²

A new era in music and singing that influenced Western music came with the Gregorian style from the Christian church. In early Christian worship, singing was a vital part since music and church rituals were developed together and became almost inseparable. In the fourth century, where Christianity was recognized as the official religion of Roman Empire, Pope Sylvester founded the Scola – Cantorum (singing school) and from that moment forward, for the next thirteen centuries, the Roman Catholic church managed for

¹The complete idiot's guide to singing p.4

² The History of Music p.111

the growth and expansion of religious singing that have evolved from simple one line chants to complex polyphony.³

The Roman Catholic Church would control the development of Western music for the next thirteen centuries, a span that saw music change from simple unison chant to the highly developed polyphonic choral style.⁴ Until the ninth century singers were often shown in the graphic designs of the era with strained expressions, wrinkled brows, protruding veins and exaggerated mouth positions signifying an effortful, probably nasal quality -twangy or reedy- as the instrumental colors of that time. In the ninth century the concept of high and low pitched voices, with the coming of polyphony, arose. As polyphony developed in complexity, singers needed be more educated, and one of the training devices created was the basis of a sight reading technique, SOLMIZATION that is still used today.⁵

Following polyphony in the 16th century came the development of opera. Interestingly, while it began as a cerebral salon experiment by the Florentine Camerata, it rapidly became a complicated and luxurious entertainment format that permitted the leisure class to display their wealth in shows of excessiveness and to do so under the guise of art and culture. Singers were attracted to opera for similar reasons: it offered them new challenges and more artistic latitude than had sacred music of the Middle Ages.⁶ The early years of opera were a time of experimentation since no compositional models or performance traditions were existed; everything was new and untried. When they assigned roles to the performers they did not consider whether their voice types were the most appropriate for the specific roles. Instead, Baroque logic dictated that the most important roles be cast with the most skilled singers. The element of virtuosity was so valued in their casting that the gender of the performer and the role matched did not play a major role. Seemingly, even though at a time the term soprano could mean a female or

³ The complete idiot's guide to singing p.4

⁴ The complete idiot's guide to singing p.4

⁵ The History of Music p. 111

⁶ The History of Music p.111

male or either of two neuters a boy soprano or a castrato, the idea of a voice type being completely linked to a particular gender was not developed.⁷

An important part of the singer's training was dedicated to the expansion of vocal agility and flexibility and to the art of ornamentation. Unlike today, dramatic intensity and excitement were not articulated with amplitude or extreme range but with rhythmic motion. Their style *concitato* engaged instrumental tremolo (rapid restatements of a pitch), the quick repetition of chords or chordal patterns, increased rhythmic density in the accompaniment and an agile, pattern-based melodic line for the singer. It was swiftness of musical progress that indicated dramatic intensity in this style, and floridity and skilled vocal agility were its vital means of expression. Virtuosity was the key test of a singer's worth, and all voice types, basses and sopranos alike were anticipated to be competent of considerable dexterity. Through most of the nineteenth century the beauty and triumph of opera lasted with composers producing more demanding roles for the singers. Singers had to consider novel approaches to singing technique and new styles such as the Italian style of *Bel Canto*.⁸

In the 18th century, while opera was becoming more and more successful as an artistic alternative, the art song became an even more interesting format as the Romantic poets produced poems filled with forthright emotion and heightened expressivity. Art song provided an alternate vocal format with heightened poetic and intellectual values.⁹

Many cultural and technological developments in the twentieth century influenced and significantly changed vocal music as we know it. A combination of both classical art form and indigenous folk songs gave rise to “popular” music that charmed the public as had no previous type of music.¹⁰ Electronic amplification was introduced in 1925 and the recording of musical instruments (especially string tone) was much improved, as was the ability to record ensembles and larger groups of performers. The orchestral repertoire began to enter record catalogs. The electronic method not only improved fidelity, it

⁷ The History of Music p.111

⁸ The history of Music p.114

⁹ The History of Music p.160

¹⁰ The complete idiot's guide to singing p.5

allowed the manipulation of sound: balancing tonal forces, controlling volume and timbre. The recording and broadcasting industries were making major strides in the application of technology to sound, and would continue to improve their equipment and techniques during subsequent decades.¹¹

Popular music emphasized the solo vocalist and through the use of technology it was easier for vocalist to be heard. The development of the microphone and amplification technology reduced the need for “big” voices that could be heard above a large orchestra. In addition, with the help of technology live performances were able to be shared with those outside the concert hall and could be also stored for future listening. As we have seen, the art of singing is constantly evolving. Today, when more people enjoy a wider variety of music and singing than at any previous time, there can be no doubt the vocal art is vigorously alive and will continue to develop.¹²

Eventually, as improvements in world wide communication and transportation gradually incorporate the various human societies into one huge global culture, our present ethnic, region and language-based individuality may become blended and less discrete. The diverse vocal ideas and singing styles of the present will be effaced in such a process, perhaps to the degree that all the singers of the world will at last be connected in a universal standard of language, musical style and vocal production. Clearly, the potential for growth and change in the universal human art of singing, far from being exhausted, is greater than ever before.

¹¹ History of Music p.200

¹² History of Music p.200

Understanding the Vocal Mechanism:

Having explored briefly the origins of solo singing, we move to a description of the vocal mechanism. The human voice can be described as a wind instrument, such as clarinet or tuba, because the voice is “played” by a controlled stream, or flow of air. The voice has the fundamental characteristics of all of man-made wind instruments. More specifically, it combines the source of air, a vibrating mechanism, a pitch selection mechanism, a chamber that amplifies the sound. ¹In the case of the human body “the lungs provide the source of air, the air causes the vocal chords to vibrate, the vocal chords rate of vibration determine the pitch of tone and the resonators in the head-including throat, mouth, nose- amplify the basic sound”.¹³

Interestingly, the human voice is not only similar to a wind instrument but has a lot of similarities with particular string instruments, such as violin since both the violin strings and human vocal chords need to be vibrated in order to produce a tone. On the violin the vibrations are created by drawing the bow across the strings while in human voice vibrations are set into motion when the breath pass over the vocal chords. The excellence of tone then depends on the sensitivity of the resonating chambers; “in the violin it’s the body of the instrument and in the human voice it’s primarily in the head”¹⁴

The human vocal mechanism can be broken into two distinct parts: the breathing system that consists of the lungs, trachea, breath support muscles and the vocal tract which consists of the vocal chords resonators and articulators like the tongue and lips. The human breathing system can then be divided in four separate parts. The Diaphragm, the Lungs, the Trachea and the Abdominal muscles. ¹⁵

¹³ The Complete idiot’ guide to singing p.39

¹⁴ The Complete idiot’s guide to singing p.39

¹⁵ The Functional unity of the singing voice p.17

The diaphragm, the vertical space of the thorax is increased by its descent, the most important muscle of inspiration. This second- largest muscle in the body divides the thorax from the abdomen. It is a double-domed layer of muscle with the right dome a little higher than the left and looks like an upturned bowl in shape. At its center is a large flat tendon which is thin but very strong. When the dome of the diaphragm is calm it can ascent as high as the fifth rib space, although it normally lies somewhat lower in quite breathing. The central tendon is pulled down and forward by the contraction of shortening of the muscle fibres of the diaphragm, flattening it and increasing the vertical diameter of the thorax. As a consequence there is an increase in volume and a decrease in pressure within the thorax. While simultaneously the descending diaphragm compresses the viscera and there is a decrease in volume and an increase in pressure within the abdomen.¹⁶

The diameter of the diaphragm is shorten by its descent the greater it's descent, the greater the potential force for it's return to the rest position. It has been found that during singing the diaphragm descends up to 6 to 7 cements while in quiet breathing it only descends about 1.5 centimetres. "As the diaphragm contracts and moves down and forward thoracic pressure is reduced and air rushes in. The rib cage expands upward and outward, and the upper abdomen protrudes as the abdominal viscera are shifted." When the expiration begins, the abdominals act antagonistically with the diaphragm as it returns to a rest position. Even though there is a belief that we have voluntary control over diaphragmatic action this is not the case. The diaphragm has no proprioceptive nerve endings; as a result it is not possible to experience any sensation of its position or movement. In the untrained singer, inspiration frequently is followed by excessive diaphragmatic antagonism. The resulting tone is monotonous and mechanical rather than vital. In contrast the steady "coordinated air flow of the trained singer is evidence of slow descent of the chest and recession of the abdominal wall during expiration".¹⁷

¹⁶ The functional unity of the singing voice p.5,18

¹⁷ The Functional unity of the singing voice p.19

Abdominal muscles, which are the principal muscles for expiration, come into play when singing. Their contraction is stable by the resistance of the diaphragm. By actively contracting when “the pelvis and the thorax are in suspended positions, the abdominals maintain a firm elasticity against both the viscera and the gradual ascent of the diaphragm”.¹⁸

Lungs tissue exerts the force provided by the elasticity of the tissue itself, it does not use any other force; consequently is passive. This elasticity is great, “the tissue is so thin-walled and porous that oxygen filters through it into the blood stream and is carried throughout the body.” The base of the lungs is concave and conforms to the thoracic surface of the diaphragm. Normal lung capacity is about one pint during quiet breathing but it increases to as much as four quarts during deep breathing. The maximum capacity of air that can be inhaled and exhaled on a single cycle of respiration is called the vital capacity. There seems to be no correlation, however, between vital capacity and tone quality, either in speech or in singing.¹⁹ The trachea is an elastic cartilaginous tube about five inches long and the width of a forefinger. It goes down from directly below the larynx, separating into the two bronchi which branch out into the lung tissue. “Each of twenty horseshoe-shaped cartilages reinforces the elastic tissue of the trachea’s walls, forming two-thirds of a ring.” (p3) The back one-third, the ring is composed of muscle fibres, permitting expansion during respiration and a certain amount of stretching when one’s head is tipped back.²⁰

The vocal tract is the part of the vocal mechanism which is responsible for producing the tone and it consists of the vocal cords, larynx, pharynx, mouth and mask. The Vocal cords aim to control pitch, the flow of air to and from the lungs and influence vocal timbre. Their anatomical name is Thyro-arytenoids. The vocal cords work as the flapping edges open and close speedily, or vibrate at a rate of hundreds or even thousands of times per second. The vibration is caused by the alternating increase and

¹⁸ The functional unity of the singing voice.13

¹⁹ The Functional Unity of the singing voice p.3

²⁰ The functional Unity of the singing voice.3

decrease of air pressure below and above the vocal folds. The quality and intensity of the sound are determined by the size, shape and texture of the chords.²¹

The Larynx that plays an important role in tone amplification is located at the top of the trachea and encases and protects the vocal folds. William Venar, a respected voice specialist stated that larynx may be “the most prized area of resonance. The pharynx extends from the top of the Larynx to the area behind the nose. It is much more than what we normally call the throat, and its impact on our singing is dramatic. The pharynx is separated in three parts that must work together to produce a free and resonant tone: a) the laryngo-pharynx (the bottom of the throat that surrounds the larynx), b) the oro-pharynx (or the back of the mouth) and the naso-pharynx (the area behind the nose). All the areas of the pharynx are important in the production of the singing tone and even the smallest adjustment can make big differences in the resulting sound.”²²

The mouth contributes greatly to the unique sound of the voice. It is perhaps the most obvious part of the resonating system. In addition the lips, teeth and tongue all act as articulators in forming words as we sing. They also play a role in adjustment of tone quality especially the tongue. The Mask is above the mouth, in the area around the eyes and nose and is very important resonator. The mask is responsible for adding the qualities of brilliance, focus to the singing tone. The mask is very important in the production of the vocal tone.²³

If we see our singing voice as the instrument we must also see the body as the instrument “case”. I think that if we know our vocal anatomy it will be easier to use imagery as we develop our voice.

²¹The complete idiot’s guide to singing p.40

²² Singing for dummies p.41

²³ The complete idiot’s guide to singing p.42

The Classification of Singing Voices

.The classification of the voice is an important requirement for the achievement of correct singing. Indeed, every adult singer should know the type of his/her voice. Notably, the general conception is that “that voice classifications are based on vocal range or pitch abilities (how high or how low you can sing)”. Nonetheless, as the voice develops and matures the voice classification may change.²⁴

Three voice classifications are typically assigned to the adult female voice: Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano and Contralto (commonly known as Alto). Soprano is the higher female voice and the typical range “starts about middle C and goes up to two octaves, where it is further subdivided into types according to their differing timbres, ranges and technical abilities”. The highest and lightest soprano is Coloratura and these singers specialize in highly ornate songs and arias. Other soprano types are the lyric soprano and dramatic soprano, known as spinto in Italian. These voices have a broader range. Mezzo, is another subdivision of Soprano and has the same general range but with a slightly more power and warmth of tone in the lower range. The lowest women voice is Alto or Contralto and the range starts on the F below middle C to the E a tenth above middle C. In classical singing the alto voice can be heavy and dark, reminding a tenor, whereas in popular music, more specifically in Jazz, alto voice is warm and rich.²⁵

The two principal classifications for the adult male voice are Tenor and Bass, with a third classification, called baritone which can be described as a halfway between the two. Tenor is not just the highest male voice (especially in popular music) but seems to be the most popular voice as well. “The tenor range extends from the C below middle C up to the A on the treble clef staff.” Tenors are categorized as Lyrics Tenors and dramatic

²⁴ The complete idiot’s guide to singing p.20

²⁵ The complete idiot’s guide to singing p.20 The naked voice p.30

Tenor. Dramatic tenors range often brings in mind the lyric Tenor, even though it shows a heavier or perhaps a more resonant quality.²⁶

Baritone, a popular and listenable voice is described as a midway between Tenor and Bass. “The typical baritone range starts on the low G on the bass clef staff and goes up to the A above middle C overlapping a large part of the female Alto range”.³⁷ The lowest and heaviest of the male voices is Bass. The typical bass range “can go as low as the first E below the bass Clef staff and as high as the E above middle C”.²⁷

Interestingly, the voice can change from one range to another throughout the years since voices grow and develop like every other part of our body. Speaking and singing voices change through the time and at the end of adolescence, when the body is fully grown, the voice type is determined. In addition, the range of voice plays a major role. Range can be described as all the notes in between, together with both the highest and the lowest notes. Beginners usually have not as strong range as the more advanced singers, but the high and low notes get stronger with practise.²⁸

The objective of classifying the voice is to steer singers towards a repertoire that best suits their anatomical, musical and physiological potential.

²⁶ The complete idiot's guide to singing p.20

²⁷ The complete idiot's guide to singing p.21

²⁸ The complete idiot's guide to singing p.21

Various singing styles and techniques :

Now we move on to consider seven singing styles, including Bel Canto ,Belting, Choral style, Rock, Jazz, Overtone Singing and Gospel. There are, undoubtedly, several singing styles throughout the world but as it was mentioned before this thesis will focus on those which I consider more stimulating.

BEL CANTO:

Bel Canto is an Italian technique for singing that is used more often in Opera singing. Bel Canto translates into beautiful singing and emerged in the seventeenth century in Florence and spread during that century to other musical centres such as Rome, Naples, Roma. At that time, singers using the technique of Bel Canto tried to increase the range of their voices to three octaves. They also produced a range of quick passages , the Scale Volate and the embellishment of vocal lines by the mechanism of coloratura for which Bel Canto became world-famous. The Italian singers learned this style through repetitive training, seeking just the correct sound which could only be attained by the proper pharyngeal and laryngeal alignment. Nowadays, Bel Canto is the most common method used in classical voice studios across the world.²⁹

The fact that Bel Canto was developed through the Italian language plays a major role. With its very phonetic characteristic, Italian words often contain consonants strung together with vowel sounds, which makes the language fluid and when spoken correctly, it resonates in the facial structure. The vowels also help in creating continues, long lines

²⁹ The art of Singing p.8

in singing. Another contributor to the continuous line is the little distinction between the start of tone and the intake of breath.³⁰

The singers of Bel Canto aimed from the beginning to develop a vocal scale that was pure and unbroken. The transition of registers – either up or down the scale – demanded an alteration in the tonal colour of the topmost notes “to prevent them from becoming disagreeable and harsh and to preserve the quality of the vowel sound as well as an even tonal line”. The front vowels which are called also “high” are clear and vivid whereas the back vowels which are called “low” are not that vivid and clear. The combination with high pitches and high vowels in singing produces the “white” or “open” quality.³¹

Bel Canto includes several styles of vocalisation. Some of the most important are canto spianato, canto fiorito and canto declamato, which are described below:

Canto Spianato: Canto Spianato or legato singing means moving from one note to another without difficulties. In addition, the singer must have a good phrasing which must be highly expressive. It is often described by the musicians as “a long line” that all the good singers must be able to achieve. It is used to indicate perfect intonation, beauty of tone and expressive articulation and swelled tones. Examples of canto spianato includes amongst others:

Atmosphere : ‘Feldeinsamkeit’ (Brahms)

Dedication ‘An die Music’ (Schubert)

Canto Fiorito: is elaborate singing and requires the ability to sing rapid passage works, ornaments, arpeggios, roulades, trills with light tone and perfect intonation. It is used by Light or Coloratura sopranos. Example:

‘Marten aller Arten’ (Mozart)

‘O luce di quest’ anima’ (Donizetti)

³⁰ The art of singing p.10

³¹ The structure of singing p.150

Canto Declamato: This style of singing needs dramatic expression, power, colourful illustration. Beauty of tone and agility are less important. Example:

‘Song of the flea’ (Moussorgsky)

‘The Erlking’ (Schubert) ³²

Nevertheless, to become a professional singer in all styles you need command not only of legato, agility and intonation but also marcato, portamento, staccato.

Marcato is each note accented without separation or stopping the breath. A slight impulse is noticed in the diaphragm. It is indicated by dots or stress marks with a phrase mark above.

Portamento: The ability to glide the voice through all tones between two notes. Upward portamento is generally more graceful than downward. Discretion is needed in either case if it's to be expressive or elegant.

Staccato : Each note separate or detached from the next. It's effect varies according to the amount of accent needed. It is similar in the action to a fresh attack on each note. No breath is to be taken between notes and long phrasing is just as important as in legato. ³³

The proper employment of the bel canto is very much dependent on the teaching style upon which it is instructed. Teaching this technique is very tricky, since the principles of this technique are to be mastered internally. The Old Italian masters relied on a system of teaching and listening to their pupils. When the student created a tone or sound that was of admirable quality, the master would urge that pupil to repeat the sound until it was memorized. This is not to say that the technique is one that just employs a trial-and-error system since there are major technical elements that are taught to the students of this

³² Voice p.62-63

³³ Voice p.30

technique. The techniques however follow the same pattern all throughout the life of the student, from his/her very first lesson until he/she becomes a professional.³⁴

The first most basic, and perhaps the most important principle in bel canto singing, is proper breathing, which is probably the first thing every bel canto teacher would teach a student. At this point, it may seem as if that bel canto singers would employ such a complicated otherworldly form of breathing, however, such is not the case. Bel canto singers breath the way humans are designed to breath and that is through the diaphragm . In diaphragmatic breathing, it is the abdominal cavity that expands rather than the chest cavity in response to the muscular activity of the diaphragm. This type of breathing is most natural to humans as it is the one employed by infants and also by adults when they are asleep.³⁵

The second important element in bel canto singing is support. This is brought about by the proper contraction of the abdominal cavity, which brings about a strong "grounding" or foundation upon which the activities in the upper/vocal cavities stand on. This is quite essential for bringing about the characteristic long and uninterrupted lines in bel canto singing. This contraction is done in conjunction with proper breathing. This also helps prevent the development of tension in the upper cavities, which are supposed to be in a most relaxed disposition while singing.³⁶

The third important aspect of bel canto singing is the opening and relaxation of the upper/vocal cavities. This is where the characteristic resonance of bel canto singing is made possible. Traditional teachers would often describe this as a yawning and hollow positioning of the mouth, forming an "acoustic dome" inside the head through the mouth and the throat. Technological innovations helped examine this closely describing it as the raising of the upper palate, the hollowing of the pharyngeal cavity, and the lowering of the larynx, as often used by more recent vocal pedagogues.³⁷

³⁴ Voice p.46

³⁵ Voice p.31

³⁶ Voice p.31

³⁷ Voice p.32

Once again these principles seem very simple and very easy. However, as experienced throughout the entire history of this technique tells, it takes rather a very long time for these techniques to be fully mastered, developed, and ingrained in students' systems, which makes its singers highly applauded.³⁸

One other characteristic of Bel Canto is *Messa di voce*, or the swell tone. It is a deviation of intensity of a single note united with a variation of colouring. The note which starts softly with a little colour increases its intensity with an instantaneous deepening of colour. Having achieved a climax of intensity and colour, it then declines and weakens to the colour and intensity from which it started. *Messa di voce* is formed by initializing the note gently .

Bel Canto is a musical style that possess varying character, function, colors and Purposes. Is one of the most interesting techniques. The purpose of *bel canto* is to produce an esthetically pleasing, continuous tone .

³⁸ Voice p.32

Belting

Belting is a very different technique from Bel Canto, which aims to provide power , resonance and colour in the voice. Belting is the sound that singers compose in pop but is used principally in musical theatre. Indeed, the speaking voice is obviously similar to this and when using the speaking voice to create a belting sound, the belting sound can easily be created by using the balance of the larynx muscles. In addition, it is necessary that you work the speaking voice to prepare it for the high energy sounds. Nonetheless, Belting's main disadvantage is that it can destroy the voice if it is not used correctly. ³⁹

Interestingly, Belting can differ between men and women and also between different voice types. It is much easier for women and especially sopranos to use belting since mezzos cords are already fat. For belting to be achieved there is a need of the continuous flow of air, nasal resonance and strong speaking voice to be combined. When the above combination is perfectly achieved belt feels like middle voice but sounds like chest voice.⁴⁰

Conversely, for men to create a belting sound a different process is required since a forward resonating sound requests to be found and a fullness of tone as the pitch is rising. This can be succeeded by nasal resonance and while turning into head voice the sound must stay thick. ⁴¹

Generally, for belting to be achieved the flow of air must be unfailingly steady. If the flow of air is fast you may need to press your self in order to produce the sound. In addition, intense belting sounds will be achieved with the increase of energy. The flow

³⁹ Singing for dummies p.164

⁴⁰ The Cambridge companion to singing p.246

⁴¹ The Cambridge companion to singing p.246

of energy necessary for the creation of belting sounds is much greater than the energy flow needed in the chest or middle voice.⁴²

Belting is occasionally defined as the use of loud chest, register phonation. Notably, harmful effects are nowadays avoided by the use of belting since singing teachers have found ways that can taught belting effectively. For instance it is more useful to practice in an environment where you're not afraid to be loud or make mistakes since if you're worried about being "too noisy" or making squawks, you'll usually tense up and therefore fail. In addition there must be no tension in the face, neck, shoulders, etc. Contrary to what some believe, a good belter does not sing with undue tension, quite the opposite, in fact. Belting requires less breath pressure (just as high notes require less breath pressure).⁴³

“Women more than men are taught to keep their voices in chest register as they soar, flattening the vowels, pinching the chords and pressing their air against the chords as they go up to into the higher range. A healthy approach to belting is to try to keep the air flowing through the voice, despite using flatter brighter vowels.”⁴⁴

Hence, it seems that Belting when practiced and developed under healthy, positive instruction can be done without damage to the instrument and in an affective manner. It should be studied rather than simply dismissed on aesthetic or preferential grounds. Belting is an appealing technique that surely must be taught.

⁴² The Cambridge Companion to sing p.247

⁴³ The Cambridge Companion to sing .247-8

⁴⁴ The Naked voice p.126

Choral style:

In Choral Technique better vocal homogeneity of control on the part of the singers is required. Notably, diverse qualities of tone must be capable to be produced by the voices and there must also be a portrayal of tone to illustrate the sob, the exclamation, the laugh . As in other singing styles and in this style, the entire gamut of dramatic emotion has now to be demonstrated by the delicate shadings of the tone feature of the voices.⁴⁵

Indeed, as in many other singing styles a more sophisticated and artistic temperament must be revealed. “In addition from pianissimo to fortissimo and crescendo and diminuendo the melting and merging of one phrase” into another the explicit eminence of any part or parts as in artistic string quartets and the appropriate consideration to contrasts of force, all need amalgamation in the modern idea of expression.⁴⁶

Moreover, words and their pronunciation call for utter attention as in all the singing styles. There should be concern about the securing right vowel amount and clear definition of consonants whether they are initial, middle or final. In phrasing its precise cautious marking of the breathing places, it has a protected normal grouping of the words. “Further the musical phrasing, when is not controlled by the text is not to left to haphazard treatment as has been too often the case.”⁴⁷

In order to secure power to phrase and obtain control of breath pressure and in order to create those astonishing fortissimo results with suggested limitless power of voice breathing must be dealt with methodically.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Choral technique and interpretation p.3

⁴⁶ Choral technique and interpretation p.3

⁴⁷ Choral technique and interpretation p.4

⁴⁸ Chr. Technique and interpretation p.20

“The qualities of voices in a choir must have a fair amount of power, the voices should be properly produced, they should have some agility and flexibility, they should be under good control, when they use collectively they should be homogeneous that is each part should sound like one full , glorified voice and not as an assortment of voices. It is the possibility of getting this unity of voice with well directed effort and a little trouble that is the bright spot and salvation of choral-voice equipment.”⁴⁹

The main disparity between solo and ensemble singing is what we call “blend” where firstly you must listen and then sing with pure vowels. Arguably, every single person in the choir has to articulate the words, in particular vowels sounds, exactly the same. It is known as “vowel unification” and it’s one of the key ways to accomplish a blend.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Choral Technique and interpretation p.20

⁵⁰The complete idiot’s guide to singing p.137

Jazz Singing and Improvisation :

Jazz singing includes a lead vocal singer with a jazz band or jazz choral group where the singer(s) embellish or ornament the main vocal line. In terms of pure vocal technique there is not much difference from singing jazz and singing classical or popular music since the same breathing and posture are used. The main difference is in the way the music is approached and presented. In the Jazz idiom there is a long history of vocal improvisation that uses a technique known as scat singing. Scatting, is the most widespread kind of improvisation. Nevertheless, “scat singing is nothing more than putting nonsense syllables to your vocal line, so you can improvise”. Simply put, jazz singing is improvising on an existing melody. One interesting approach to scat singing is using your voice to imitate the sounds of the world around you and the more colorful your solos the better.⁵¹

Jazz singers differ from classical singer since they use a different type of diction. The way they pronounce words in Jazz should be the same way they pronounce them in conversation . Nevertheless, jazz singer can still sing on the vowels. The fact that the singer pronounces them as in conversation doesn't mean that they should mumble the words since the singer must still sing the words in a way that they can be understood. Indeed, they need to be more conversational in their approach. In other words, when they are singing Jazz, the words need to be sung as close as possible to the way they speak. “This means they should sing a lot of sounds that don’t fall into the pure vowel category but by doing this they will discover the more conversational style performance that is jazz”.⁵²

⁵¹ The complete idiot’s guide to solos and improvisation p.187

⁵² The complete idiot’s guide to solos and improvisation p.189

Another technique in Jazz has been developed by the singer Jon Hendricks. This technique is Vocalese, a newer form of jazz vocals, and is the art of writing new lyrics to the melodies of jazz instruments. The goal is to give the jazz vocalist something to sing other than scat syllables.⁵³

Hence, quoting Bill Evans one of the most and influential American Jazz pianists, “Jazz is a mental attitude rather than a style. It uses a certain process of the mind expressed spontaneously through some musical instrument”.

⁵³ The complete idiot's guide to solos and improvisation p.190

Overtone singing:

Overtone Singing developed in several parts of the world including Mongolia, the Canadian Arctic. In Mongolian, the term is known as *khoomi* while in Canada, it is called throat singing or overtone singing because the phonation occurs in the throat. What makes this form of singing so distinguishable from all other forms is the way in which the singer manoeuvres the overtones. What we mean by overtone is “any tone or pitch, except perhaps one generated electronically, that consists of a fundamental a series of harmonics”. The timbre of a given tone is fixed by the emphasized overtones and by the relative weakness or strength of the various overtones. When we emphasize low overtones in a tone it will likely sound warm whilst if emphasis is given to upper overtones the tone will sound bright and harsh.⁵⁴

In overtone singing the performer (male and female) “produces usually with major pressure a fundamental and by shaping the mouth cavity brings out different patterns of overtones. A series of well-controlled, changing overtones produces an actual melody over a drone”. The first time a person listens to it wonder how these unique sounds that remind of whistling are produced. Indeed, most listeners will be confused and assume that two people are performing since there are clearly two sets of pitches, a low held drone and an upper melody. Surprisingly, however, is just a single person that produces both vocal lines at the same time.⁵⁵

In Mongolia, this unique style of singing is closely linked to the animistic beliefs that still exist today. The sound represents and imitates the sounds of nature, in other words it tries to duplicate that rich timbres of natural phenomena, such as the twirling wind or rushing water. In addition, there is a belief that mountain rivers and animals have spiritual

⁵⁴ World music p.206

⁵⁵ World music p. 206

energy that is obvious not just physically but sonically as well. Throat singers think they can assimilate this power by making such sounds. ⁵⁶

The throat singing that is used in the tradition Inuit culture is distinctive. Is performed by two women who use each other's mouths as sound boxes to resonate tones .⁵⁷

Throat singing is a unique and unusual style of singing. Not surprisingly, is one of the most difficult styles to be achieved. Indeed, it is astonishing that a singer can produce two voices simultaneously, and obviously is something that deserves to be watched.

⁵⁶ World music p.206

⁵⁷ World music p.206

Rock:

Rock singing is typically characterised by its intense emotive and dramatic qualities, its physical presence, it's original authenticity. Even though there are many rock singers who are classically trained, rock singing has nothing in common with the trained disciplined technique, the pure tone and the objectifying control that are to be found in classical singing since rock singing is a natural expression.⁵⁸

Notably, in much rock singing, the absence of low larynx technique and of diaphragm-oriented breath control lead to relatively speech-like voice production; that “individuality of the voice quality tends to be at a premium and that the resulting directness of utterance is often taken to be a mark of expressive truth”. This flouting of ‘good singing’ is to be found at the core of either approving or dismissive approaches to rock.⁵⁹

Indeed, what makes rock is the sense of energy. More specifically, excitement for what a rock singer sings vital for rock singing since if there is lack of excitement not just the band but the audience as well will not be excited. What makes a good rock singer is the ability to include energy in a song and to keep it at a consistently high level while he sings. Through the whole performance the singer need to entirely rocking with energy even while still or silent. The energy that the singer retains is mainly mental. “It is a combination of excitement awareness and intent”. The tone must be again and again refreshed with that energy at each fresh note⁶⁰

Rock singers singing off pitch is either singing sharp (slightly above the pitch) or flat (slightly below the pitch) on any given note. Rock singers never “make” pitches from the throat. The singer’s thought is what creates the pitch, so think the tones. They must learn

⁵⁸ The Cambridge Companion to sing p.29

⁵⁹ The Cambridge companion to sing p.29

⁶⁰ The Cambridge Companion to sing p.29

to listen to the tone they are creating, not just bear it. Rock singing is not just having a good voice is also about having attitude, persona, developing your range and understanding vocal techniques like vocal resonance. Rock singing vocal style is characterised by harsh, rough timbres. The lyrics does not have as essential role as the vocal styles involved such as the shouting and screaming. In addition the music in rock singing is loud, rhythmically insistent. ⁶¹

Rock is the utmost basis of energy and movement. The tempo, rhythm and vitality of the music is an important inspiration for the singers energy. “The emotion contained in the music also provides great impetus for the singer”. The singer will be stimulated to harmonize his energy with the energy and excitement in the music. This is intrinsic in all great singing.

⁶¹ Basix Rock singing techniques p.30

Gospel:

Gospel is closely associated with Afro American culture. Gospel is a sacred style of singing that aims through music and words to describe and express extraordinarily spiritual experiences. Gospel performance requires the use of energy, drama and intense. Gospel songs were developed in churches where people sang with their soul and embellished their performance with melodic ornamentations and improvisation.⁶²

Gospel is divided into three forms, all having similar religious roots. Southern Gospel, is known as mountain gospel or country music. It “grew out of a white rural tradition and inspired early rockabilly performers”. Black Gospel has its roots in the African American church and has motivated the growth of rhythm and blues and soul music. Then there is the Contemporary gospel which is similar to much of today’s Christian pop music. All three types of gospel create emotionally charged music connected to religious lyrics, even though the music differs dramatically between the forms. The Black Gospel is that most of us recognise “as the decidedly distinctive musical form and that requires the most dramatic vocal technique”.⁶³

Black Gospel is typically sung by a choir with individual singers taking solo roles. The music is usually “ping- ponged’ between the choir and the soloists in a call and response format, with the soloists embellishing the melody to give more emphasis. These embellishments in an effort to display the spiritual ecstasy the music was meant to produce can be quite virtuosic performed with wild emotion.⁶⁴

The embellishment of a gospel melody “may take the form of jazz like improvisation, or of classical forms of the embellishment, such as grace notes, trills, turns and melisma.

⁶²The complete idiot’s guide to singing p.182

⁶³ The complete idiot’s guide to singing p.182

⁶⁴ The complete idiot’s guide to singing p.182

Less traditional embellishment such as moans, shouts, cries, gliding pitches or spoken interjections”. This type of embellishment typically increases as the emotional intensity of the performance increases.⁶⁵

Another way gospel singers use to raise the intensity of their performances is that they make immediate changes vocal register or dynamics. In addition, they breathe between words or breathe in the middle of phrases or even produce intentionally breathiness or airy tones.⁶⁶

Gospel singing is emotional and jubilant. Its main characteristic is that the singers sing with their soul, through singing they communicate with god, gospel singing is the mean of transferring their hopes and wishes to Him. Hence as it was once stated by Mahalia Jackson (one of the best gospel singers) “When you sing Gospel you have a feeling there is a cure for what’s wrong”.

⁶⁵ The complete idiot’s guide to singing p.182

⁶⁶ The complete idiot’s guide to singing p.182

Conclusion:

In this thesis, I was able to explore and learn a great deal about singing. Throughout the history of singing we had a birds eye view on the growth and expansion of singing. Indeed, through ancient time until present day the social, political, religious and culture life of people is reflected through singing, since it is a means of expression, a reflection of your feelings, it is a way to deliver messages, a poetic medium, a form of art and entertainment. Indeed, we like singing because it conjures emotions and appeals to the conscious and subconscious mind of the listener, allowing the listener to create whatever image she or he desires.

Indeed, having to pick among several subjects my curiosity has driven me to write a thesis about the different singing styles around the world. I used to think that Bel Canto was the most important style, nevertheless having the chance to study more singing styles I have realized and came to the conclusion that all singing styles are unique and have their own techniques and importance. Bel Canto, meaning beautiful singing in the Italian language, is a well-known singing style that emerged in late 17th-century Italy and has spread all over the world. Through this technique the singer develops a vocal range that it is pure, unbroken and legato. There must be expression and power in the voice. The hard thing about Bel Canto singing is that it needs years of practice and exercise. Another music style that impressed me is Belting, which is most frequently used in theater and pop music. Belting aims to provide resonance and colour in the voice. In Belting the speaking voice is obviously similar to the singing voice. Moving on, another singing style is choral singing which main characteristic is that all voices must sound as one; there must be unity and uniformity.

Jazz is, for me, one of the most interesting styles because it allows the singer to create melodies through improvisation and the singer is able to equal an instrumental solo by

means of nonsense syllables focusing on the melodic line. Indeed, to be able to improvise on melodies and rhythms you need to be creative. What is attractive in jazz singing is that you can pronounce words in Jazz as in conversation.

Undoubtedly, I could say that overtone singing was for me a pleasant discovery. Overtone singing is a unique style that few know about it. Overtone singing aims in producing two different voices by the same person at the same time. Indeed, most listeners will be confused and assume that two people are performing since there are clearly two sets of pitches, a low held drone and an upper melody. Surprisingly, however, is just a single person that produces both vocal lines at the same time.

Rock is all about energy, the energy that the singer produces on stage. In this style, technique does not play a major role, rock has to do more with emotions, passion and dramatic qualities. Gospel on the other hand has to do with a very different kind of energy from that found in rock. This style was developed in church and is for man a means of communication with God, since through music and words he could describe and express extraordinarily spiritual experiences. Gospel performance requires the use of energy, drama and intensity.

Undoubtedly, there are numerous singing styles, and not all could be stated in this thesis. I have chosen to write about the singing styles that were the most interesting to me. Through this thesis I now understand that even though technique plays a central role in almost all musical styles there is still a further requirement; the use of your soul, the ability to feel what you sing, to express yourself through singing. Nonetheless, as I have mentioned and in vocal mechanism, singing also combines the use of your body, since the voice is an instrument, not just a sound, and the instrument is your body. In order to be able to sing correct, you have to use correctly the different body parts, such as your larynx, the diaphragm etc.

A good singer needs persistence practice in order to do as much as s/he can. Studying a vocal style or technique could be described as an art. All these forms require that you

have a great deal of expertise both in the technical ability and as a communicator. Communication is not only important but is also vital when singing. Nonetheless, singing combines both the message you try to pass on and the emotion of the song.

Indeed, as once Richard Wagner put it “The human voice is really the foundation of all music; and whatever the development of the musical art, however bold the composer's combinations, however brilliant the virtuoso's execution, in the end they must always return to the standard set by vocal music.”

RESUME :

V této práci se zabývám zkoumáním různých druhů zpěvu. Dějiny hudby nam nabízejí docela jasný a stručný pohled na vývoj zpěvu. Ve snaze si vybrat mezi několika tématy, má zvědavost mě přinutila napsat práci o různých světových pěveckých stylech. Přemýšlela jsem o Bel Cantu jako velice důležitý styl zpěvu ale také jsem měla možnost poznat i jiné styly. Pak jsem si uvědomila že každý pěvecký styl je jedinečný a má své unikátní techniky a zvukové hodnoty.

Bel Canto, v italštině -krásný zpěv, je světově známý pěvecký styl. Díky této technice zpěvák dospěje k čistému a celistvému zvuku svého hlasu a k dokonalému legatu. Pravdou je že dosažení výsledku v tomto stylu vyžaduje léta tvrdé práce. Další styl který mě zaujal je Belting-ten se užívá v divadle a v populární hudbě. Belting se snaží poskytnout rezonanci barvu hlasu. Následně se zabývám sborovým zpěvem, charakteristické pro kterého je, že všechny hlasy by měli znít jako jeden, měli by být spojený a jednotný. Jazz je také styl který mě zajímá z toho důvodu že zpěvák musí tvořit melodii prostřednictvím improvizace. Alikvotní zpěv byl pro mě velkým objevem- je to technika/způsob zpěvu/ při které jeden člověk dokáže vytvořit dva odlišné tóny ve stejném okamžiku. A pak Rock- to je vše o energii, energii kterou dokáže vytvořit zpěvák na jevišti. V tomto stylu technika nehraje velkou roli. Rock má co do činění s emocemi a vášněmi. Gospel- na druhou stranu- je styl založený na emocích úplně odlišného druhu. Tento styl byl vytvořen v kostele a je jeden ze způsobů předpokládané lidské komunikace s Bohem.

Nepochybně to jsou jen některé z existujících druhů zpěvu a ne všechny by měly být předmětem zpracování v této práci. Já jsem se rozhodla psát o stylech o kterých se zajímám osobně. Díky této práci jsem pochopila že přes veškerou techniku ve většině hudebních stylů jsou spíše důležitější další požadavky/či podmínky k interpretaci/: použití vnitřního citu a pochopení interpretované hudby, sebevyjádření prostřednictvím zpěvu aj.

Dospěla jsem také k závěru že zpěv by nemohl existovat bez existenci lidského těla,čili hlas je instrument v lidském těle.Abychom mohli zpívat správně musíme používat správně určité části svého těla-například larynx,bránice aj.

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